

## **RELATED ISSUES, OUTSIDE THIS IFM CONTRACT**

**ACCESS.** During the field assessment, the team noted severe access problems throughout the county and within much of the City of Bonners Ferry. Many roads in the county and streets in the city get very narrow near their terminus. They often turn into narrow, steep private lanes and drives. In many cases large fire fighting equipment would have problems negotiating the road, especially if conditions were smoky and particularly if excited residents were attempting to evacuate. A high proportion of the county roads and city streets provide only one route of entrance/egress. Adequate turn arounds to accommodate fire trucks often do not exist. It would be prudent for both the county and the city to develop a long-term strategy for investment in fire fighting/emergency evacuation access. Evacuation access is a concern for a variety of disaster situations beside forest fires.

**PREPAREDNESS.** The National Fire Plan is the umbrella under which this plan and other wildland fire issues is being addressed and funded. A part of the National Plan is the upgrading of fire fighting agencies and organizations through out the country. This concept is referred to as preparedness. A well prepared organization is well equipped, well trained and well staffed to meet most situations. If a major amount of wildland fuel modification work is accomplished, the work can be doubly effective if all the fire organizations in the county are well prepared. It will be important for the County Commissioners to continue monitoring the progress of these organizations in upgrading equipment and training.

**MAP COORDINATION.** In our preparation of this plan we found several indications of needed coordination of mapping efforts in the county. Various county departments seem to use their own maps while other departments do not seem to be aware of these maps.

An example of how problems could arise is noted on the map we got for the city of Moyie Springs. On this map, several county roads have numbers that differ from those on the county road and bridge map, which was used as our base for field assessment. In rapidly evolving emergencies, such discrepancies can cause dangerous delays in use of equipment or initiating evacuations. Not all emergencies are handled by “locals,” who know the area well and do not need maps.

It is hoped that the creation of a GIS mapping system for the county will negate this concern.

**MAINTENANCE.** It is important for all who work with this plan to be aware of the urgent need for maintenance activities to continue after the initial fuel mitigation work is completed.

One characteristic of most of the fuel types in Boundary County is that they will aggressively begin to recreate ladder fuels. Much of the land in the county has adequate soil depths and receives enough annual moisture to support re-growth of brush species and re-initiation of conifer seedlings after work is completed.

Follow-up work will be relatively easy in the first year after initial treatment, and become increasingly more difficult in later years. In some habitat types, if follow-up work isn't accomplished by the third or fourth year, fuel conditions are likely to have returned to pre-treatment danger levels.